

Health awareness in women with the use of traditional medicinal plants in district Raipur of Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

Medicinal plants have always been the principle sources of medicine in India. It is well established that herbal medicines play a crucial role in health care for a large part of the population living in developing countries. Recently considerable attention has been paid to utilize eco-friendly and bio-friendly plant based products for the prevention and cure of different human diseases. India has a rich traditional knowledge and heritage of herbal medicine. The present paper deals traditional uses of plant species by the rural people of rural area of Raipur. The claims were gathered by interviewing traditional healers, especially villagers, of the study area. Findings of the study show the increased use of traditional medicine among the natives of the study area. The highest prevalent herbs in this area are Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), Amla (*Embllica officinalis*), Gritkumari (*Aloe barbadensis*), Erand (*Ricinus communis*), Apamarg (*Achyranthus aspera*), Lasun (*Allium sativum*), Nirgundi (*Vitex negundo*), Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), Harjor (*Cissus quadrangularis*), Mahanimb (*Melia azedarach*) and Satawari (*Asparagus racemosus*).

Keywords: Ethno medicine, Medicinal plants, *Ocimum sanctum*

INTRODUCTION

In India, Chhattisgarh is famous as Herbal State with medicinal hot spots. Raipur District is situated in the fertile plains of Chhattisgarh Region. This is situated between 22°33' to 21°14' Latitude and 82°6' to 81°38' Longitude. About 12% of the India's forests are in Chhattisgarh and 44% of the state's area is the store house of precious medicinal plants.

Ethnobotany is the study of how the people of a particular culture and regions make the use of indigenous plants. It is evident that many valuable herbal drugs have been discovered by knowing that particular plant was used by the ancient folk healers for the treatment of some kind of ailment [1]. The status of the medicinal plant of the study area has been established [2,3 and 4]. The present paper gives an account of the health awareness among rural women with the use of traditional medicinal plants in Chhattisgarh.

STUDY AREA

The present investigation has been carried out in the rural areas of district Raipur of Chhattisgarh. For proper and orderly study; the study sites were selected considering the population and density of flora. Direct discussions with different informants were made and the uses of the plants were recorded. About 10 villages around the area were visited and surveyed; where interviews of about 130 local informants took place. Information was gathered from each site by

using a semi-structured and close ended questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Chhattisgarh, rural people prefer traditional medicines because of cultural rooted faith on indigenous herbs, their easy accessibility, low-cost, friendly attitude of healers and so on. There is a wide range of herbal and home remedies prevalent in rural areas to cure various ailments. Living close to nature, they acquired the knowledge of natural resources that exist around them in the forest ecosystem. During the study; it was observed that herbs and herbal preparations are used in the treatment of:

- Gastro-intestinal disorders like diarrhea, constipation and piles etc
- Respiratory disorder.
- Musculoskeletal disorders including bone fracture.
- Disorders of central nervous system.
- Gynecological disturbances.
- Fevers and infections.
- Chronic metabolic diseases like heart diseases, diabetes, and anaemia.
- Skin diseases.
- Snake bite, scorpion bite and bites of certain poisonous insects.

Gastro-intestinal disorders like diarrhea, constipation and piles etc

It was observed that occurrence of diarrhea is highest in rainy season. A total of 40 herbs have been reported by the inhabitants of Chhattisgarh. The most frequently used herbs were Bel (unripe fruit pulp), Bhui amla (decoction of all whole plant and methi seed

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powder) and Methi (seed powder with curd). To cure the problem of constipation, about 19 herbs and herbal preparations have been reported by the studied population. Results of the study show that the highest prevalent herbs for the treatment of constipation are the Erand (oil), Gritkumari (leaf pulp) and Baheda (dry seed powder). According to the study, the highest prevalent herbs used for the treatment of piles are Palash (flower), Bathua bhaji (fresh leaves) and Apamarg (dry root powder).

Respiratory disorders

Respiratory problems are very common among the people in the study area. During the change of weather or transitional period, hot decoction of Tulsi (leaves) in combination with ginger is regularly taken by them. Bhui amla (plant extract), Apamarg (decoction of whole plant), Nirgundi (oil from fresh leaves) and Guduchi (stem juice and root bark), are other most prevalent herbs taken as precautionary measure or to cure seasonal cold, cough, bronchitis and asthma.

Musculoskeletal disorders including bone fracture

Women of the study area have rich traditional knowledge about the herbs useful in bone fractures. As the name indicates Hadjod (crushed stem paste, decoction and powder of stem), it plays a vital role in quick reunion of fractured bones. Erand (oil), Lasun (intake of buds), Punarnava (whole plant and roots) are used to alleviate body pain, joints pain, muscular pain and swelling. Nirgudi (oil and bark powder) and Shatavari (root) are reported for the cure of sciatica, goute and rheumatism.

Disorders of Central nervous system

Results of the study show that the highest prevalent herb for the treatment of nervous disorders is Brahmi (leaves), Ashwagandha (root). According to local informants (old women) they use Brahmi (leaves) as memory stimulant since generations. Bel (decoction of root) and Nirgundi (oil from fresh leaves) are used as brain tonic and to cure migraine.

Gynecological disturbances

Leucorrhoea is the most common problem of women. Ashoka (stem bark), Daru haldi (dried stem), Triphala (seed powder of amla, harad and baheda) and ripe bananas are mainly used to cure the problem. Shatavari (root and leaves) is used by local women as female reproductive tonic. Bhui amla (whole plant), Erand (flowers), Safed musli (root powder), Chaulai and Tinpaniya (both as cooked leafy vegetable) are also reported to alleviate gynecological disturbances.

Fever and Infections

Decoction of Tulsi (leaves) in combination with Kalmegh and Bel (fruit pulp) with Sonth (dried stem) are useful in Malaria and Cholera. Erand (oil and root), Mahanimb (bark) are also useful in seasonal fever.

Chronic metabolic diseases like Heart diseases, Diabetes, and Anaemia.

It is reported that Bel (ripe fruits), Apamarg (root) and Erand (oil) are used to treat the heart patients. Gudmar (leaves), Neem (leaves, seeds), Jamun (seeds), Methi (seeds), Karela (fruits), Bel (fresh leaf extract) and Punarnava (roots and whole plant) in combination with Guduchi (stem) works well to cure diabetes. Anaemia, which is the most prominent among rural women is caused due to nutritional deficiency can be cured by regular intake of Anar (fruit), Munga (pods), Ashwagandha (leaves) and Brahmi (leaves).

Skin diseases

Herbs like Ashwagandha (paste of boiled leaves), Shatavari (root) and Erand (root bark) are most frequently used to cure wounds, scabies, ringworm and leucoderma. Guduchi (stem, leaves) with Bemchi (seeds) is known to be very effective in treatment of leucoderma. Bel and Tulsi (leaves) are used for healing minor wounds and skin infections. Bel (leaves) also work as natural deodorant.

Hepatic disorders

It is reported that local women are aware of various home remedies by using herbs to cure this problem. The infection in liver is caused mainly due to contaminated water and food. Amarbel (paste of whole plant), Bel (ripe fruits), Punarnava (fruits), Bhui amla (extract of plant) are prevalent herbs to cure acute inflammation of liver.

Snake bite, scorpion bite and bites of certain poisonous insects

Due to the presence of dense forests in Chhattisgarh, various poisonous snakes and scorpions are inhabited. Snake bites and scorpion stings are common during rainy season. It was observed that generally during the rainy season, the people are prone to snake bite and scorpion sting. Mahua (fruit pulp) and Guduchi (decoction of whole herb) possess antivenom properties and are useful in case of snake bite. Bel (leaves) is used to treat Bees bite. Apamarg (leaves, decoction of whole plant) is very useful in the treatment of scorpion sting and snake bite.

CONCLUSION

The advantage of this study is to highlight the health awareness among women with special reference to the indigenous medicinal plants of the Chhattisgarh. Findings of the above study show the increased use of traditional medicines among the natives of the Chhattisgarh. It increases the possibility of successful integration of traditional medicine into public health sector by the government and non government organization.

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